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ABSTRACT

A literature review of the use of peer supervisors in counselor training and supervision identified theories which mention the use of peers in the supervision process and revealed several points for consideration in selecting peer supervisors and implementing a peer supervision program. A Likert-style peer supervision rating form was developed and tested as a practical way to keep trainees focused on observations in counseling skills. The purpose of the peer supervision rating sheet was to stimulate more research in the area of peer supervision. Ten counselor trainees role-played counseling sessions, while their peers rated them. Discussions of the ratings followed, with specific interest in the difference between 1 (poor), 3 (average), and 5 (excellent) for each item on the scale. In group supervision, the peer supervisors shared the ratings with the student who was observed, and each peer supervisor discussed how the observed student might improve individual ratings. As an outgrowth of the peer supervision, the supervisees took a more active role in requesting help from the supervisors, and their requests for skill development were more specific than in previous years. (Indications for further research are provided, and the rating form is appended.) (TE)

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Peer Rating Form in Counselor Supervision

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RUNNING HEAD: PEER RATING

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Abstract

A brief literature review of the use of peer supervisors was presented in this paper. The peer supervision rating form was introduced and discussed as a practical way to keep trainees focused in observations on counseling skills. The purpose of the peer supervision rating sheet was to stimulate more research in the area of peer supervision. Indications for further research were also given.

Abstract

A review of the use of peer supervisors, exploration of practicum peer supervision, and development of a peer-rating form was the focus of this paper.

Peer Rating Form in Counselor Supervision

Quality supervision of counselors-in-training has become the focus of most state legislatures and reform reports on colleges and universities. In an effort to provide quality education for counselors-in-training, improved supervision methods are sought. Blocher (1983), Patterson (1983), Barlett (1983), Wessler and Ellis (1983), Loganbill, Hardy and Delworth (1982) and others have written that the goal of supervision is to develop competent counselors and/or therapists. In order to develop competent counselors, counselor educators have felt an obligation to provide an effective training program. A practical answer to improving supervision has been to use peers in the supervisory process.

Using peers in supervision has appeared in theories of supervision which espoused the importance of group supervision. Theories which mention the use of peers in the supervision process were cognitive development (Blocher, 1983), client-centered(Patterson, 1983) and rational-emotive (Wessler & Ellis, 1983). Wessler and Ellis (1983) suggested that the RET format provided for group a discussion and criticism by both the supervisor and the supervisees. Blocher (1983) acknowledged the importance of including the collegial and peer relationships, but did not see the relationships as the sole focus of supervision. Patterson (1983) described the didactic group supervision seminar, but quickly pointed out that the supervisees were in the role of supervisor. In these articles, the role of peers in supervision varied greatly.

However, each theory considered feedback from peers important in the supervision process.

Remley, Benshoff and Mowbray (1987) have advocated peer supervision among professionals, particularly after leaving the university setting. In addition, Remley, Benshoff and Mowbray (1987) have recommended several considerations for use in the selection of peer supervisors. If peer supervision appeared to be effective after graduation, would it not appear to be effective prior to graduation? Perhaps experience in peer supervision prior to graduation would have made a significant contribution to the development of the individual professional. In regard to peer supervision in professional development, Remley, et al., (1987) have made several recommendations for consideration. Remley, et al., (1987) first consideration is that the peer supervisor's level of training and experience be compared to the colleague being supervised. Remley, et al, (1987) made the point that no two colleagues have exactly the same level of expertise, which added to the dimension of the supervision or idea exchange. Counselor trainees have varied in their expertise at the practicum entry level. The trainees varied in work histories, ethnic backgrounds, life experiences and geographical locations. These differences in the trainees made a rich tapestry of experiences and perspectives from which to draw in the supervision process.

A second point for consideration was the theoretical foundation of the peer supervisor (Remley, et al., 1987). The

consideration was that "when peer supervisors share the same counseling orientation, little time will need to be spent justifying each counselor's particular style" (Remley, et al., 1987, p. 55). Students who have received most of their training in the same institution have shared similar counseling orientation but may not have shared the same theory of counseling. An eclecticcounseling program that has emphasized good counseling skills, as opposed to a particular theory, has met this requirement. The third consideration was the work setting of the peer supervisor, as set forth by Remley, et al., (1987). The point was made that a peer supervisor from a different setting may have provided the counselor with a more objective view (Remley, et al., 1987). Many programs in counselor education have prepared counselors not only for public school counseling but also for other work settings in agencies, colleges and businesses.

Many of the students, who have returned for a counseling degree, have already been employed. Others are concurrently employed in positions that are being considered by other students enrolled in counselor education. Such diversity in the work experience of the students made peer supervision even moreeffective in providing different perspectives during feedback.

The last consideration of Remley, et al., (1987) was that of the sex of the peer supervisor. Remley, et al., (1987) reported that there were conflicting studies on whether having a same sex or different sex supervisor was better. In group supervision, each student was provided with input of both sexes.

However, Kagan (1983) has indicated that it is a false assumption to believe that a person who can counsel can also supervise. The intention of using peer supervisors was not to replace the experienced counselor supervisor, but rather was two-fold. First, the peer supervisor remained focused during observations and recognized the skills of observed counselors. Secondly, the supervisee received several different perspectives of his/her counseling session.

Master's level counselors-in-training appeared to have difficulty in providing peer supervision feedback as described by Patterson (1983) without some structure provided. Students complained of not knowing what elements were indicative of "good counseling." In an effort to help students focus their observations in peer supervision, the Peer Supervision Rating Sheet (Table I) was developed.

Each element in the rating sheet was discussed using definitions drawn from Wittmer and Myrick (1974), Ivey and Gluckstern (1974), Carkhuff (1969), Egan (1986) and Cormier and Hackney (1987). Students then role-played counseling sessions, while their peers rated them. Discussion of the ratings followed with specific interest in the differences between ratings of 1, 3 and 5. Students generated examples of what would be level 1, 3, and 5 ratings. A level 1 response was considered to be a response with a spurious presence. A level 3 was considered to be a response that was present and appropriate to the client. Level 5 was considered to be a response that was clearly exceptional.

In group supervision the peer supervisors shared the ratings with the student who was observed. Each peer supervisor contributed to the discussion as to how the observed student might improve individual ratings. In addition, clearly exceptional ratings were acknowledged. The emphasis was on what the supervisee did best. Insights into clients or suggestions for intervention were shared among trainees. The supervisor provided additional learning activities as needed and as requested.

As an outgrowth of the peer supervision, the supervisees took a more active role in requesting help from the supervisor. Supervisees' requests for skill development were much more specific than in previous years. More requests were made for help in intervention and problem-solving strategies. The increase instudent initiated requests for skill development was an approximate 50 percent increase. However, the requests for individual supervision through reviewing audiotaped sessions decreased 100 percent. Therefore, the supervisor was freed to use supervision time for en vivo supervision.

The sample of counselor trainees consisted of 10 subjects. Because of the limited size of the sample, a statistical study would have yielded questionable results. However, if a larger sample were available, further research might be warranted. First of all, a training program to establish interrater reliability appeared to be indicated. In addition, peer supervision needed to be contrasted to other forms of supervision.

Although this paper has not been conclusive, the author hoped the ideas contained generated a viable option for further research in the field of peer supervisors in counselor education. In addition, the peer supervision rating form was meant to provide a spring board for future researchers.

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Table I

Peer Supervisor Rating Sheet

Counselor Peer Supervisor

Time: Beginning Ending

Counseling Skill Evaluation Criteria

	Poor				Excellent
1. Establishes rapport.....	1	2	3	4	5
2. Keeps focus.....	1	2	3	4	5
3. Explores problem.....	1	2	3	4	5
4. Reflects feelings.....	1	2	3	4	5
5. Makes open-ended statements.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Communicates clearly.....	1	2	3	4	5
7. Does not use questions.....	1	2	3	4	5
8. Congruent non-verbal and verbal behavior.....	1	2	3	4	5
9. Problem-solving model evident.....	1	2	3	4	5
10. Closure.....	1	2	3	4	5
11. Summarizes.....	1	2	3	4	5
12. Clarifies.....	1	2	3	4	5
13. Generates alter atives.....	1	2	3	4	5
14. Confronts.....	1	2	3	4	5
15. Uses humor appropriately....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall rating.....	5	10	15	20	25

SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY

ALPINE, TEXAS 79832

School of Professional Studies

TO: Kip Sullivan
Education Faculty

FROM: Phyllis Musgrove Phyllis Musgrove

DATE: October 30, 1990

RE: A Celebration of Teaching

I saw "A Celebration of Teaching" mentioned in an ad in a recent issue of Teacher and sent for information. It is attached. I am going to write a proposal for one of the $1,000 awards from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation and would like input from you on how we can organize our "Celebration." I have some ideas for starters.

We could arrange our "Celebration" on Saturday and invite a specified number of students from area high schools who are interested in teaching. We could also have at least one teacher from each school district on the program to talk about why they chose teaching as a career and to invite the youngsters to consider a career in education. I suggest that our speakers be teachers who have supervised student teachers.

Or we could use the " Celebration" specifically to honor our cooperating teachers and ask each of them to bring students from their district who are interested in teaching. Invite the students to consider a career in education and give them handouts with information.

Also, we could take a "road show" to each of the districts and sponsor "A Celebration of Teaching" in each school district, perhaps presenting some type of awards to cooperating teachers and/or outstanding teachers from the district. Invite students from each district to consider a career in education and give them handouts with information.

I am sure you can give me some good ideas too and will look forward to hearing from you! I would like to have your thoughts by Monday, November 12.

END

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Date Filmed

March 21,1991